

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6082
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 0422

3.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AF, TU
SUBJECT: AFGHAN-TURKISH RELATIONS

1. NOW THAT THERE IS A NEW TURKISH GOVERNMENT, I BELIEVE IT MIGHT BE TIMELY FOR US TO INDICATE TO THE TURKS THAT WE THINK IT DESIRABLE FOR THEM TO STRENGTHEN THEIR TIES WITH AFGHANISTAN. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT WOULD BE TO OUR MUTUAL INTEREST IN TERMS OF STRENGTHENING AFGHANISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH THE NON-COMMUNIST WORLD.

2. THERE HAVE BEEN TIMES IN THE PAST WHEN TURKEY PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN PROVIDING MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN, IN CEMENTING AFGHAN TIES WITH THE ISLAMIC WORLD, AND IN HELPING TO RESOLVE AFGHANISTAN'S PERENNIAL PROBLEM WITH PAKISTAN. HOWEVER, IT IS NOW ALMOST THREE YEARS SINCE THERE HAS BEEN A TURKISH AMBASSADOR IN AFGHANISTAN. THE TURKS HAVE BEEN REPRESENTED HERE BY A MIDDLE-GRADE OFFICER ACTING AS CHARGE. I UNDERSTAND THAT THE ORIGINAL REASON FOR THE POST BEING LEFT VACANT WAS THAT FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER CAGLAYANGIL FELT
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TURKEY HAD NOT BEEN GIVEN SUFFICIENT CREDIT BY THE AFGHANS FOR HELPING TO BRING ABOUT THE PAK-AFGHAN RAPPROACHMENT WHICH BEGAN IN THE SPRING OF 1976 (WHEN BHUTTO CAME HERE THE FIRST TIME). MORE RECENTLY, WE ARE TOLD THE APPOINTMENT OF AN AMBASSADOR WAS HELD UP BY A RIGHT-WING ISLAMIC FACTION OF DEMIREL'S GOVERNMENT WHICH DEMANDED THAT ONLY PEOPLE WITH PROPER ISLAMIC CREDENTIALS BE SENT AS AMBASSADORS TO ISLAMIC COUNTRIES.

3. FURTHERMORE, RECENT INDICATIONS HERE ARE THAT THE AFGHANS MAY BE CONSIDERING A RENEWAL OF THEIR MILITARY ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH TURKEY. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT, REGARDLESS OF ITS EVENTUAL DIMENSIONS, WOULD SERVE OUR FUNDAMENTAL INTEREST IN HAVING AFGHANISTAN REDUCE ITS VIRTUALLY COMPLETE DEPENDENCE UPON THE SOVIET UNION FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE. CLEARLY, A RESIDENT TURKISH AMBASSADOR IN KABUL COULD NOT BUT ASSIST IN THE POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENT OF SUCH A SENSITIVE POLICY.

4. IN SUM, WHATEVER THE CAUSES FOR THE PRESENT HIATUS IN AFGHAN-TURKISH RELATIONS, I SUGGEST THAT WE TALK TO THE TURKS AT A HIGH LEVEL IN ANKARA TO SEE IF THE SITUATION CANNOT BE RECTIFIED.
ELIOT

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